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[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.13 and Add.1)*]

71/9. The situation in Afghanistan

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 70/77 of 9 December 2015 and all its previous relevant resolutions,

Recalling also all relevant Security Council resolutions and statements by the President of the Council on the situation in Afghanistan, in particular resolutions 2189 (2014) of 12 December 2014, 2210 (2015) of 16 March 2015 and 2274 (2016) of 15 March 2016,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, and respecting its multicultural, multi-ethnic and historical heritage,

Welcoming the efforts by Afghanistan in the framework of the Transformation Decade (2015–2024) to consolidate its sovereignty through strengthening a fully functioning, sustainable State in the service of its people, with the goal of becoming fully self-reliant,

Reaffirming the long-term partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community based on their renewed mutual commitments, as laid down in the Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework, as agreed upon at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan on 5 October 2016, and recalling the long-term commitment of the international community to Afghanistan, reaffirmed at the Conference, with the aim of strengthening national ownership and leadership, taking into account the evolving nature of the presence of the international community,

Reaffirming also the commitment of the international community to continue to support the training, equipping, financing and development of the capacity of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, including as agreed in the Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan in 2012, in the Wales Summit Declaration on Afghanistan in 2014 and in the Warsaw Summit Declaration on Afghanistan in 2016, and honouring the memory of the men and women of the Afghan and international security forces who have given their lives in the course of duty,

Reiterating the urgent need to tackle the challenges facing Afghanistan, in particular the region-based violent extremist activities of the Taliban, including the

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Haqqani Network, Al-Qaida and other violent and extremist groups and criminals, including those involved in the narcotics trade, the development of the institutions of the Government of Afghanistan, including at the subnational level, the strengthening of the rule of law and democratic processes, the fight against corruption, the continuation of justice sector reform, the promotion of the peace process, without prejudice to the fulfilment of the measures introduced by the Security Council in its resolutions 1267 (1999) of 15 October 1999, 1988 (2011) and 1989 (2011) of 17 June 2011, 2082 (2012) and 2083 (2012) of 17 December 2012, 2160 (2014) and 2161 (2014) of 17 June 2014, 2253 (2015) of 17 December 2015 and 2255 (2015) of 21 December 2015 and other relevant resolutions, an Afghan-led transitional justice process, the safe and voluntary return of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons in an orderly and dignified manner, the promotion and protection of human rights, interfaith and intra-faith tolerance and the advancement of economic and social development,

Expressing serious concern regarding the dangerous presence and activities of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh) affiliates in Afghanistan and their brutal acts, including the killing of Afghan nationals,

Expressing its deep concern about the continuous high level of violence in Afghanistan, especially the number of civilian casualties, condemning in the strongest terms all terrorist activity and all violent attacks, recalling that the Taliban, Al-Qaida and other violent and extremist groups and illegal armed groups are responsible for the significant majority of the civilian casualties in Afghanistan, and calling for compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable, and for all appropriate measures to be taken to protect civilians, humanitarian workers and aid and humanitarian facilities,

Welcoming the achievements of the National Unity Government in political, economic, governance and social reforms and in the management of transition, underlining the need to preserve past achievements, and urging further improvement in this regard, in particular to address poverty and the delivery of services, stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities, increase domestic revenue and promote human rights, especially women's rights and the rights of persons belonging to minorities,

Emphasizing the central and impartial role of the United Nations in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, expressing its appreciation and strong support for all of the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Afghanistan in this regard, expressing its appreciation also for the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in accordance with Security Council resolution 2274 (2016), and stressing the important role of the Assistance Mission in seeking to further improve the coherence and coordination of international civilian efforts, guided by the principle of reinforcing Afghan ownership and leadership,

Welcoming the reports of the Secretary-General[1] and the recommendations contained therein,

1. *Pledges its continued support* to the Government and people of Afghanistan as they rebuild a stable, secure and economically self-sufficient State, free of terrorism and narcotics, and strengthen the foundations of a constitutional democracy as a responsible member of the international community;

[1] A/69/540-S/2014/656, A/69/801-S/2015/151, A/70/359-S/2015/684 and A/71/616-S/2016/768.

2. *Encourages* all partners to support constructively the Government of Afghanistan's reform agenda, including as envisaged in the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and the Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework, so as to secure a prosperous and democratic Afghanistan, focusing on strengthening the constitutional checks and balances that guarantee citizens' rights and obligations and implementing structural reform to enable an accountable and effective Government to deliver concrete progress to its people;

3. *Supports* the continuing and growing ownership of reconstruction and development efforts by the Government of Afghanistan, emphasizes the crucial need to achieve ownership and accountability in all fields of governance and to improve institutional capabilities, including at the subnational level, in order to use aid more effectively, and underscores in this regard the importance of the commitments of the international community and of the new set of indicators for the Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework, as reiterated in the communiqué of the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in October 2016;

Security

4. *Recognizes* the commitment of the international community to support the training, equipping, financing and development of the capacity of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces beyond the end of the transition period and throughout the Transformation Decade, including as agreed in the Chicago Summit Declaration on Afghanistan in 2012, in the Wales Summit Declaration on Afghanistan in 2014 and in the Warsaw Summit Declaration on Afghanistan in 2016, including through the Resolute Support Mission, as welcomed by the Security Council in its resolution 2189 (2014);

5. *Welcomes* the pledges and commitments of the Warsaw Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, held on 8 and 9 July 2016, to continue national contributions to the financial sustainment of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, including until the end of 2020, and to sustain the Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016, to continue to deliver training, advice and assistance to the Afghan security institutions, including the police, the air force and special operations forces;

6. *Reiterates once again its serious concern* about the security situation in Afghanistan, stresses the need to continue to address the threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan caused by the region-based violent extremist and other illegal armed groups and criminals, including those involved in the narcotics trade, expresses concern over the serious threat posed by the presence of foreign terrorist fighters, reiterates in this regard its call for the full and serious implementation of measures and the application of procedures introduced in relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 1267 (1999), 1988 (2011), 1989 (2011), 2082 (2012), 2083 (2012), 2160 (2014), 2161 (2014), 2253 (2015) and 2255 (2015), and calls upon all States to strengthen their international and regional cooperation to enhance information-sharing, border control, law enforcement and criminal justice to better counter the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters and returning foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan and the region;

7. *Expresses its serious concern* regarding the presence of terrorist organizations, in particular Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), and its brutal acts, including killings of Afghan nationals, and in this regard affirms its support for the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to combat these threats in the country;

8. *Condemns in the strongest terms* all unlawful acts of violence, intimidation and attacks, including improvised explosive device attacks, suicide attacks, assassinations, including of public figures, abductions, indiscriminate attacks against civilians, killings, attacks against individuals, media groups and organs of society engaged in the promotion and protection of universally recognized human rights, attacks against humanitarian workers and the targeting of Afghan and international forces, which have a deleterious effect on stabilization and development efforts in Afghanistan, and also condemns the use, by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, Al-Qaida and other violent and extremist groups and illegal armed groups, of civilians as human shields, Taliban attacks and acts of international terrorists;

9. *Stresses* the need for the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to continue to work closely together and to improve coordination in countering such acts, which are threatening peace and stability in Afghanistan and the democratic process, the achievements and the continued implementation of the Afghanistan development gains and process, as well as humanitarian aid measures, recognizes the achievements of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in this regard, and calls upon all Member States, in particular neighbouring countries, to deny those groups any form of sanctuary, freedom of operations, movement, recruitment and financial, material or political support that endangers the State system and regional peace and security;

10. *Welcomes* the assumption of full security responsibility by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, commends the resiliency and courage displayed in this regard, calls upon the international community to provide the support necessary to increase security, including public order, law enforcement, the security of Afghanistan's borders and the preservation of the constitutional rights of Afghan citizens, as well as to provide continued support by training, equipping and contributing to the financing of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces to take on the task of securing their country and fighting against international terrorism, underscores the importance of the Chicago, Wales and Warsaw Summit Declarations on Afghanistan and other relevant agreements with regional and international partners, and takes note in this regard of the Warsaw Summit Declaration on Afghanistan;

11. *Also welcomes*, in this regard, the presence of the Resolute Support Mission, which was preceded by the International Security Assistance Force, expresses its appreciation to Member States for having contributed personnel, equipment and other resources to the Mission and for the support provided to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces by all international partners, in particular by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization through its previous combat and current non-combat missions in Afghanistan, as well as other bilateral training programmes, and encourages further coordination, where appropriate;

12. *Further welcomes* the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan, with a view to ensuring stability and providing conditions for the effective rule of law and respect for human rights, in particular women and children's rights, to continue its security sector reform by making the security provision, management and oversight of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces more effective and accountable, recognizes the importance of further implementation of the Afghan National Police Strategy and the 10-year vision presented by the Ministry of the Interior, and expresses its appreciation for the support Member States have provided to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces;

13. *Recalls* that regional security cooperation plays a key role in maintaining stability in Afghanistan and the region, welcomes the progress achieved by Afghanistan and regional partners in this regard, and calls for further efforts by Afghanistan and regional partners and organizations, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to strengthen their partnership and cooperation, including to enhance the capabilities of the Afghan security forces and to enhance security in the region;

14. *Remains deeply concerned* about the persistent problem of anti-personnel landmines and explosive remnants of war, welcomes the achievements to date in the implementation of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan aimed at declaring Afghanistan mine-free by 2023, underscores the importance of sustained international assistance, encourages the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the United Nations and all relevant actors, to continue its efforts to meet its responsibilities under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,[2] expresses concern at the use of improvised explosive devices by the Taliban against civilians and the Afghan security forces, and notes the need to enhance coordination and information-sharing between both Member States and the private sector to prevent the flow of improvised explosive device components to the Taliban;

Peace and reconciliation

15. *Welcomes* the peace agreement signed by the Government of Afghanistan and the High Peace Council with Hizb-i Islami on 22 September 2016 as an important development in the overall peace effort of the Government, and calls for its effective implementation;

16. *Recognizes* that an Afghan-led inclusive peace process backed by regional actors, in particular Pakistan, supported by the international community, is essential for achieving long-term peace and stability in Afghanistan, reiterates its firm commitment to support the Government of Afghanistan in its efforts in this regard with all those who renounce violence, sever ties with international terrorist organizations, including Al-Qaida, respect the Constitution, including its human rights provisions, notably the rights of women and girls, as well as the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and are willing to join in building a peaceful Afghanistan, with full respect for the implementation of the measures and application of the procedures introduced by the Security Council in its resolutions 1267 (1999), 1988 (2011), 2082 (2012), 2160 (2014) and 2255 (2015), as well as other relevant resolutions of the Council, calls upon all relevant States, especially neighbouring countries, and international organizations to remain engaged in the Afghan-led peace process, and recognizes the impact terrorist attacks have on the Afghan people and risk having on future prospects for a peace settlement;

17. *Encourages* Afghanistan and Pakistan to enhance their relationship, which could lead to cooperation to effectively combat terrorism and move forward the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process;

18. *Recalls* that women play a vital role in the peace process, as recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 1325 (2000) of 31 October 2000 and in related resolutions, including resolution 2242 (2015) of 13 October 2015, welcomes steps taken by the Government of Afghanistan in implementing its national action

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2056, No. 35597.

plan on women, peace and security, recognizes in this regard the increasing role of women in the peace process, as manifested in their representation in the High Peace Council and its provincial committees and secretariats, as well as their contribution to the development of the Afghanistan peace and reconciliation strategy, as reflected in the recent report of the Secretary-General,[1] supports further efforts in this regard, and encourages the Government of Afghanistan to further support the active participation of women in the peace process;

19. *Recognizes* that there is no purely military solution to ensure the stability of Afghanistan, welcomes the continuation of the efforts of all regional and international partners of Afghanistan to support peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, including through the work of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group on the Afghan Peace and Reconciliation Process of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States of America, towards the holding of early direct peace talks between the Government of Afghanistan and authorized representatives of Taliban groups, and calls upon Group members and all other regional and international partners of Afghanistan to continue their efforts;

Democracy

20. *Emphasizes* the importance of all parties in Afghanistan working together to achieve a unified, peaceful, democratic and prosperous future for all the people of Afghanistan;

21. *Recalls* the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan, reiterated at the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan on 8 July 2012, to strengthen and improve Afghanistan's electoral process, and welcomes in this regard the issuance of the electoral law on 28 September 2016 and the intention of the Government to implement in 2017 the essential electoral reforms and prepare for elections to further restore trust and confidence in the electoral process and its institutions;

22. *Welcomes* the increasingly wide and comprehensive dialogue on the political transition towards strengthening the unity of the Afghan people, and underscores its importance for consolidating democracy and Afghan political stability;

23. *Calls upon* the Government of Afghanistan to continue to effectively reform the public administration sector in order to implement the rule of law and to ensure good governance and accountability, and welcomes the efforts of the Government and its commitments made in this regard;

Rule of law, human rights and good governance

24. *Emphasizes* that the rule of law, human rights and good governance form the foundation for the achievement of a stable and prosperous Afghanistan;

25. *Recalls* the constitutional guarantee of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Afghans, without discrimination of any kind, stresses the need to fully implement the human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution, in accordance with obligations under applicable international law, in particular those regarding the full enjoyment by women and children of their human rights, and acknowledges efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in this regard;

[1] A/71/616-S/2016/768.

26. *Reiterates its concern* at the destructive consequences of violent and terrorist activities, including against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, Al-Qaida and other violent and extremist groups and other illegal armed groups and criminals, for the enjoyment of human rights and for the capacity of the Government to ensure human rights and fundamental freedoms for all Afghans, stresses the need to further promote tolerance and religious freedom and to ensure respect for the right to freedom of expression and the right to freedom of thought, conscience or belief as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution and the international covenants that Afghanistan adheres to, emphasizes the necessity of investigating allegations of current and past violations, stresses the importance of facilitating the provision of efficient and effective remedies to the victims and of bringing the perpetrators to justice in accordance with national and international law, calls for full implementation of the mass media law, while noting with concern and condemning the continuing intimidation and violence targeting Afghan journalists, such as cases of abduction and even the killing of journalists by terrorist and extremist and criminal groups, urges that harassment and attacks on journalists be investigated by Afghan authorities and that those responsible be brought to justice, and welcomes in this regard the issuance of the presidential decree of 31 January 2016 outlining specific measures for ensuring the safety, security and protection of journalists;

27. *Reiterates* its unwavering commitment and that of the Government of Afghanistan to achieving the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of Afghan life, and commends the achievements and efforts of the Government aimed at countering discrimination and protecting and promoting the equal rights of women and men as guaranteed, inter alia, by its ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women[4] and by the Afghan Constitution, the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and the law on the elimination of violence against women;

28. *Emphasizes* the need to ensure respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of children in Afghanistan, and recalls the need for the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5] its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography[6] and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict[7] by all States parties, as well as of Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) of 26 July 2005, and all other subsequent resolutions on children and armed conflict, and Council resolutions 1998 (2011) and 2286 (2016) of 3 May 2016 on attacks against schools and/or hospitals, in particular by terrorist and extremist and criminal groups, commends the Government of Afghanistan for introducing legislation banning the recruitment and use of children, and welcomes the progress made on the implementation of the action plan for the prevention of underage recruitment, signed in January 2011, and the annex thereto on children associated with the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, and of the road map towards compliance;

29. *Reiterates its appreciation* for the anti-corruption commitment made by the Government of Afghanistan, welcomes in this respect the establishment of the High Council on Governance, Justice and Anti-Corruption, the Anti-Corruption

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1249, No. 20378.

[5] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.

[6] Ibid., vol. 2171, No. 27531.

[7] Ibid., vol. 2173, No. 27531.

Criminal Justice Centre and the National Procurement Commission, as measures taken by the Government to implement its comprehensive reform agenda, strengthen governance and achieve a more effective, accountable and transparent administration at the national, provincial and local levels of government, welcomes in this regard the notable progress made thus far, as presented and endorsed at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, and encourages continued decisive action by the Government to establish a more effective, accountable and transparent administration at the national, provincial and local levels of government;

30. *Calls upon* the international community to support the efforts of Afghanistan to meet governance objectives in this regard;

Counter-narcotics

31. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in fighting drug production in Afghanistan, takes note of the report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime entitled "Afghanistan Opium Survey 2016" released in October 2016, which, inter alia, notes an increase in the production and cultivation of drugs and stresses the need to further strengthen joint, coordinated and resolute efforts by the Government, supported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, international and regional actors, within their designated responsibilities, and encourages international and regional cooperation with Afghanistan in its sustained efforts to address drug production and trafficking;

32. *Stresses* the importance of a comprehensive and balanced approach in addressing the drug problem of Afghanistan, which, to be effective, must be integrated into the wider context of efforts carried out in the areas of security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and economic and social development, particularly in rural areas, including the development of improved alternative livelihood programmes;

33. *Notes with great concern* the strong nexus between the drug trade and terrorist activities by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, Al-Qaida and other violent and extremist groups and criminal groups, which pose a serious threat to security, the rule of law and development in Afghanistan and the region, and stresses the importance of the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions in this regard, including resolutions 2253 (2015) and 2255 (2015);

34. *Calls upon* the international community to continue to assist the Government of Afghanistan in implementing its National Drug Control Strategy and National Drug Action Plan aimed at eliminating the cultivation, production, trafficking in and consumption of illicit drugs, including through increased support for Afghan law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, agricultural and rural development for the creation of improved alternative livelihoods for farmers, demand reduction, the elimination of illicit crops, increased public awareness and capacity-building for drug control institutions and care and treatment centres for drug addicts, reiterates its call upon the international community to channel counter-narcotics funding through the Government, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant mechanisms to the extent possible, notes that the problem of production, cultivation, trafficking in and consumption of narcotic drugs should be addressed on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility of the Government of Afghanistan and the international community, and welcomes and supports the joint regional activities carried out by Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan within the framework of the triangular initiative to counter narcotics;

Social and economic development

35. *Welcomes* the new Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework setting out the strategic policy priorities of Afghanistan towards achieving self-reliance and the presentation of five new national priority programmes, on a citizens' charter, women's economic empowerment, urban development, comprehensive agriculture and national infrastructure, to improve the conditions for advancing sustainable development and stability;

36. *Renews its commitment* to long-term support for the economic development of Afghanistan on the basis of mutual accountability as stated in the Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework, urgently appeals to all States, the United Nations system and international and non-governmental organizations, including the international and regional financial institutions, to continue to provide, in close coordination with the Government of Afghanistan and in accordance with the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework and the national priority programmes contained therein, all possible and necessary humanitarian, recovery, reconstruction, development, financial, educational, technical and material assistance for Afghanistan, and underlines the crucial importance of continued and sequenced implementation of the reform agenda, national priority programmes and the development and governance goals as agreed in the Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework;

37. *Recognizes* the substantial development and notable progress achieved by Afghanistan with the steadfast support of the international community in the past years, expresses its support for the reaffirmation and consolidation of the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community during the London Conference on Afghanistan, held in 2014, at the outset of the Transformation Decade (2015–2024), in which Afghanistan will consolidate its sovereignty through strengthening a fully functioning, sustainable State in the service of its people, urges the Government of Afghanistan to involve all elements of Afghan society, in particular women, in the development and implementation of relief, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction programmes, and welcomes the presentation by the Government of Afghanistan of the national priority programme on women's economic empowerment;

38. *Welcomes* the continued progress in implementing the Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework and the monitoring mechanism included therein, in which the Government of Afghanistan reaffirmed its commitment to strengthen governance, grounded in human rights, the rule of law and adherence to the Afghan Constitution, and held it as integral to sustained growth and economic development, and in which the international community committed to enhance the efficiency of development aid by aligning assistance with the Afghan national priority programmes and by channelling assistance through the national budget of the Government, as outlined in the Tokyo Declaration: Partnership for Self-Reliance in Afghanistan – From Transition to Transformation,[8] and reaffirmed in the communiqué of the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan and the new Self-reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework indicators;

39. *Commends* the Government of Afghanistan for aligning its new development strategy with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[9]

[8] A/66/867-S/2012/532, annex I.

[9] Resolution 70/1.

acknowledges significant progress made by the Government towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2020, and urges the international community to assist the Government in completing its unfinished Millennium Development Goals and implementing its Sustainable Development Goals;

40. *Also commends* the Government of Afghanistan for improving budgetary transparency and its efforts to reach fiscal sustainability, notes the challenges ahead, and urges that continued efforts be made to meet revenue targets;

41. *Recognizes* the necessity for further improvement in the living conditions of the Afghan people, and emphasizes the need to strengthen and support the development of the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to deliver basic social services at the national, provincial and local levels, in particular education and public health services;

42. *Reiterates* the necessity of providing Afghan children, especially Afghan girls, with educational and health facilities in all parts of the country, and welcomes the progress achieved in the sector of public education;

Refugees

43. *Expresses its appreciation* to those Governments that continue to host Afghan refugees, in particular Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, acknowledging the huge burden they have so far shouldered in this regard, asks for continued generous support by the international community, and asks relevant international organizations, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, to continue to work closely with Afghanistan and the countries hosting Afghan refugees with a view to facilitating their voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return, rehabilitation and reintegration;

44. *Welcomes* the outcome of the high-level segment on the Afghan refugee problem of the sixty-sixth session of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, held in Geneva on 6 and 7 October 2015,[10] also welcomes the outcome of the International Conference on the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries, held in Geneva on 2 and 3 May 2012, and looks forward to the further implementation of the joint communiqué of the Conference, aimed at increased sustainability of returns and continued support for host countries, through the sustained support and the directed efforts of the international community;

45. *Expresses its concern* over the recent increase in the number of internally displaced persons and refugees from Afghanistan, stresses that stability and development in Afghanistan can be achieved if its citizens can see a future for themselves within their country, reiterates to host countries and the international community the obligations under international refugee law with respect to the protection of refugees, the principle of voluntary return and the right to seek asylum and to ensure full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian relief agencies in order to provide protection and assistance to the refugees, and calls upon countries to continue to accept an appropriate number of Afghan refugees for resettlement, as a manifestation of their shared responsibility and solidarity;

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[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 12A* (A/70/12/Add.1), annex II.

46. *Takes note* of the cooperation framework recently signed between the Government of Afghanistan and the European Union, entitled "Joint way forward on migration issues", and in this context underscores the importance of close and effective cooperation to address the problem of irregular migration in a comprehensive manner, with due focus on and consideration of addressing the root causes of migration, including through job creation and the establishment of returnees' livelihoods in Afghanistan, and in accordance with international commitments and obligations, including the human rights and legal rights of all migrants and the rights of persons in need of international protection in line with the provisions of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[11] and the 1967 Protocol thereto,[12] as applicable;

47. *Welcomes* the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to making the repatriation and reintegration of Afghan refugees one of its highest national priorities, including their voluntary, safe and dignified return and their sustainable reintegration into national development planning and prioritization processes, and encourages and supports all efforts of the Government towards the implementation of this commitment;

48. *Reaffirms its firm support* for the implementation of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries endorsed by the international community in 2012, and acknowledges the Enhanced Voluntary Return and Reintegration Package for Afghan Refugees as an innovative way to enhance sustainable return and reintegration;

49. *Welcomes* the continued return of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons, in a voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable manner, while noting with concern the security challenges of Afghanistan;

Regional cooperation

50. *Stresses* the crucial importance of advancing constructive regional cooperation as an effective means to promote peace, security, stability and economic and social development in Afghanistan, recognizing in this regard the importance of the contribution of neighbouring and regional partners and regional organizations, recalling the importance of the Kabul Declaration on Good-neighbourly Relations of 22 December 2002[13] and welcoming in this regard the continued commitment of the international community to support the stability and development of Afghanistan, encourages further improved relations and enhanced engagement between Afghanistan and its neighbours, calls for further efforts in this regard, including in the framework of the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan and by regional organizations and long-term strategic partnerships and other agreements aimed at achieving a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan, welcomes international and regional initiatives in this regard, such as those of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan process, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and also welcomes the formation of the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism in Counter-

[11] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[12] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[13] S/2002/1416, annex.

Terrorism by Afghanistan-China-Pakistan-Tajikistan Armed Forces to coordinate and support their efforts in counter-terrorism areas;

51. *Welcomes* the important initiatives for regional connectivity, notably in the frameworks of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process confidence-building measures to facilitate increased trade throughout the region, and looks forward to the forthcoming Heart of Asia ministerial meeting, to be held in Amritsar, India, on 4 December 2016;

52. *Emphasizes*, in this regard, the importance of strengthening local and regional networks of transportation that will facilitate connectivity for economic development, stability and self-sustainability, particularly the completion and maintenance of local railroad and land routes, the development of regional projects to foster further connectivity and the enhancement of international civil aviation capabilities;

53. *Welcomes and urges* further efforts to strengthen the process of regional economic cooperation, including measures to facilitate regional connectivity, trade and transit, including through regional development initiatives such as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road) Initiative, and regional development projects, such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000), the Chabahar agreement between Afghanistan, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lapis Lazuli Transit, Trade and Transport Route agreement and the Turkmenistan-Aqina railway segment, and bilateral transit trade agreements, expanded consular visa cooperation and facilitation of business travel, to expand trade, increase foreign investments and develop infrastructure, including infrastructural connectivity, energy supply, transport and integrated border management, with a view to promoting sustainable economic growth and the creation of jobs in Afghanistan and the region, noting the historical role of Afghanistan as a land bridge in Asia, recalls that such regional economic cooperation plays an important role in achieving stability and development in Afghanistan, and in this regard urges all relevant stakeholders to ensure a secure environment for these development initiatives and trade agreements to be fully implemented;

United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board

54. *Expresses its appreciation* for the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, as mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2274 (2016), stresses the continued importance of the central and impartial coordinating role of the United Nations in promoting a more coherent international engagement, and acknowledges the central role played by the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in this regard;

55. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to report every three months on developments in Afghanistan, as well as on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution;

56. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-second session the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan".

47th plenary meeting
17 November 2016